

# Theatre and politics in an official poet of the Court. The Habsburg dynasty in Bances Candamo's theatre<sup>1</sup>

## Teatro y política en un poeta oficial de la Corte. La dinastía Habsburgo en el teatro de Bances Candamo

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**Abstract.** This article proves that there is a disproportion in the bibliography when the scholars analyse the political ideas in the courtly theatre by Bances Candamo. Only few works are studied using the political notions and, in many occasions, these researches are unsuitable, because they employ contemporary perspectives, which are certainly inappropriate for the reality of the seventeenth century. The author of this article studies the political conceptions in two works: *La restauración de Buda* and *El Austria en Jerusalén*. Both have usually been studied using other perspectives.

**Keywords.** Theatre; Politics; Bances Candamo; *La restauración de Buda*; *El Austria en Jerusalén*.

**Resumen.** En este artículo, se demuestra que existe un cierto desequilibrio en la bibliografía crítica a la hora de interpretar las ideas políticas del teatro cortesano de Bances Candamo. Unas pocas obras de la totalidad de ese teatro son objeto de análisis político y, en ciertas ocasiones, estos análisis están desfasados, porque se aplican ideas contemporáneas que nada tiene que ver con la realidad de finales del siglo XVII. Para evitar este desfase, el autor de este artículo analiza la ideas políticas

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que se encuentran en dos obras: *La restauración de Buda* y *El Austria en Jerusalén*, a las que la crítica se ha acercado siempre por otros caminos.

**Palabras clave.** Teatro; política; Bances Candamo; *La restauración de Buda*; *El Austria en Jerusalén*.

A quick look to the *Bibliografía primaria general del teatro de Bances Candamo* [General Bibliography of Bances Candamo's Theatre], that I have published with other three GRISO researchers<sup>2</sup>, provides a general overview of the work of scholars who study Francisco Antonio Bances Candamo, a playwright who lived at the end of the seventeenth Century and the beginning of the eighteenth. A quick look at this *Bibliography* reveals three fundamental gaps in the literature. First, we need to produce critical editions that will provide the scholar with reliable texts. Second, while we have focused our attention on several works, such as *El esclavo en grillos de oro* and *La piedra filosofal*, many of Bances' plays have received scarcely any attention, for example *El Austria en Jerusalén*; *Cómo se curan los celos* y *Orlando furioso* or *La Jarretierra de Ingalaterra*. Third, the disciplinary focus of the scholarship is uneven. While some of Candamo's works have been analysed only in terms of political ideas (such as those found in *El esclavo en grillos de oro* and *La piedra filosofal*), analysis of other works focuses on the relationship between literature and history, for example in *La restauración de Buda*. Obviously, there are some exceptions to this polarization of focus, most notably in articles by Arellano<sup>3</sup> and Suárez Miramón<sup>4</sup>.

GRISO researchers are preparing a complete critical edition of Bances Candamo's works, thus addressing the first two concerns I have raised. This project, which is producing edited and annotated texts, is intended to generate new interest in these works. GRISO researchers have also taken a step further by focusing on analysing the political issues and political propaganda in two of Bances' plays: *La restauración de Buda* and *El Austria en Jerusalén*. These aspects of these two works have not received great critical attention.

Preparing a critical edition of these two works has helped me understand their similarities. *La restauración de Buda*<sup>5</sup> and *El Austria en Jerusalén* are historical works whose plots focus on the conquest of two cities: one focuses on the conquest of the Hungarian city of Budapest and the other on the conquest of Palestinian Jerusalem. So we can think of the actions in both works as very similar: both plots center on an assault on the walls of a city under siege, and a defensive attack in response... There are other similarities worth mentioning. For example, in *El Austria en Jerusalén*, the actions of Leopold VI of Habsburg, who audaciously risks his own life, resembles the actions of the Duke of Béjar in *La restauración de Buda*,

2. See Duarte, 2010. To obtain the document: <http://www.unav.edu/web/griso/proyectos/bances-candamo>.

3. See Ignacio Arellano, 1988a, 1988b, 1998a, and 1998b.

4. See Suárez Miramón, 1992.

5. I have published some articles analysing this play. See Duarte, 2005 and 2007.

another heroic figure. The spy-clown Hugo in *El Austria en Jerusalén* is very similar to the spy-clown Uberto in *La restauración de Buda*. The sultan's palace garden in Jerusalem reminds readers of the Abdi Baja's garden in the town of Buda. The love triangle among Jarifa, Ibraín and Amurates in *La restauración de Buda* corresponds to that of Violante, Federico II, and the Sultan in *El Austria*. Also, both comedies use the same technique to depict magical events, an element that Blanca Oteiza has studied in depth<sup>6</sup>.

*La restauración de Buda* was first staged in the «saloncete» of the Buen Retiro Palace on 15 of November of 1686, and it was played again later that year in the Coliseum between 2 and 9 December. Since the city of Buda was not captured until 2 September of that year, Bances Candamo had only two and a half months to gather the information about what had happened, and write and stage the play. It is more difficult to know when the process of writing *El Austria en Jerusalén* began, because, as Duncan W. Moir<sup>7</sup> explains, this play was firstly mounted before the public in Valladolid in 1695, after Bances Candamo had left Madrid and his position of official poet of the court. Thus it is difficult to find more information that would help us understand why he wrote this work and when he wrote it.

The analysis of those who study Bances Candamo's political ideas as transmitted through his plays is curiously dichotomous. On the one hand, García Castañón vehemently defends the notion that Bances Candamo described kings who were intended to depict the incompetence of Charles II.

He argues that although Bances Candamo's censure is not directed against the king himself, but against the government incompetence in which the country was sunk, we must recognise that this condemnation did extent to the person of the king<sup>8</sup>. In another article, García Castañón argues that Bances Candamo accepts Machiavellian ideas, when he insists on concepts such as *virtù*, which the Spanish playwright translates as *valor* (courage)<sup>9</sup>. Villar Castejón misinterprets the attitude of Bances toward the Habsburg Empire as one of praise:

Bances displays monarchic fervor, common to all the playwrights of the seventeenth century, to a pathetic degree. In fact, for Bances, this enthusiastic admiration, which is so intelligible in Lope and even sensible in Calderón, illustrates a heroic effort to defend a monarchy controlled by an inept king, although he was the most powerful monarch of the world<sup>10</sup>.

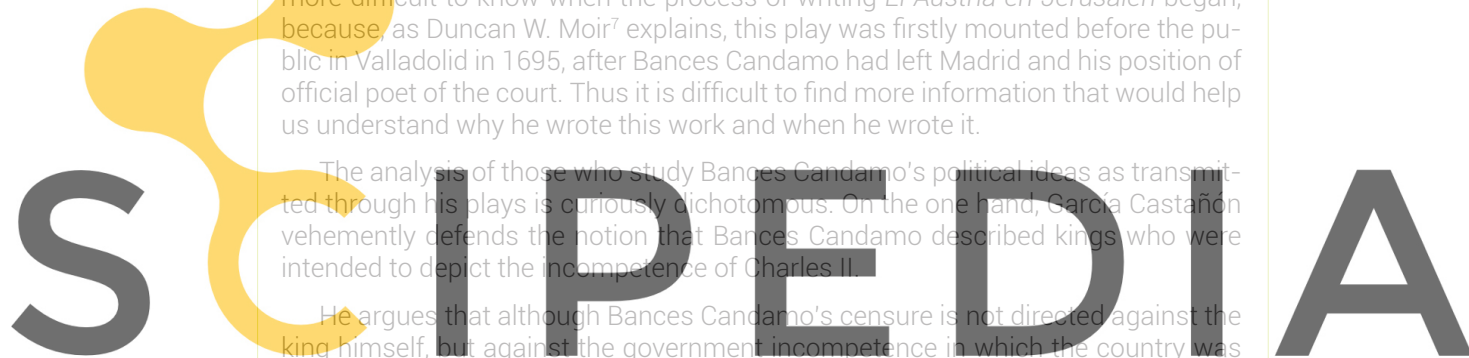
6. See Oteiza, 2007.

7. Bances Candamo, *Teatro de los teatros*, p. xxxii.

8. See García Castañón, 1993.

9. See García Castañón, 1991.

10. Villar Castejón, 1979, p. 547: «El fervor monárquico, común a todos los comediógrafos del XVII, adquiere en Bances caracteres de patetismo. En efecto esa admiración entusiasta que en Lope resulta explicable, y razonable en Calderón, reviste en nuestro autor, acentos casi heroicos por el empeño de defender una monarquía que a la sazón se encuentra en manos de un inepto, pero de un inepto que es, sin embargo y pese a todo el monarca más poderoso del mundo».



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Arellano tries to place Bances' dramatic production within the context of the circumstances in which his plays were conceived. In this way, he establishes that Bances' interpretations had to be removed from the prejudices and preconceived ideas of our time. In his opinion, Bances' theatre must be studied from two perspectives. First, we must understand that this theatre was a courtly spectacle, and thus it was essential for the playwright to exalt and glorify the king and the members of his family. Second, Bances' plays must be analysed using his own dramatic theory, which he published in the well-known *Teatro de los teatros*, in which he said that the main role of his plays was to instruct the king, and offer models to imitate. This does not necessarily mean that the playwright had a well-thought-out political program; rather, his plays illustrate a series of virtues that a monarch should embody<sup>11</sup>.

Two complementary ideas that are found in *La restauración de Buda* are used to justify the actions of the characters. Bances introduces them with clarity in the «Prologue-dedication» to Queen Mariana of Austria in the 1686 edition of the play, a *suelta* that describes the theatrical feast:

Of the four animals, used to show the prophet Daniel the four peerless empires, the fourth one symbolises the Roman Empire and the ten horns found in its forehead are the ten main provinces over which its dominion was divided: Syria, Egypt, Asia, Greece, Africa, Spain, France, Italy, Germany and Britain. Among these horns, one appears, very small at the beginning, with eyes, and later it grew so much that it broke three of the toughest horns that were adorning the forehead of this monstrous animal. This small horn represents the Turkish Empire, which had a humble beginnings, but grew to occupy three of the Roman provinces: Egypt, Asia and Greece. The prophet Daniel predicted with the image of the tree and the statue that the Roman Empire would last until the next coming of Christ and that no other power will be able to exterminate it, as it is represented by the roots of the tree and the iron sole of the statue's foot, because they always remain one in the tree and the others in the plant. From this, the ruin of the Ottoman Empire is deduced, because the Roman Empire will continue until the end. The text indicates only three provinces for the Ottoman Empire. And as they have already seized these three provinces, its dominance will not persist<sup>12</sup>.

11. Ver Arellano, 1988a, 1988b, and 2010.

12. This *suelta* is known as F in my critical edition. See the details: Francisco Antonio Bances Candamo, *La comedia la restauración de Buda. Fiesta real que se representó a sus Majestades en la celebridad del agosto nombre del señor emperador, Leopoldo primero, el día quince de noviembre de este presente año de 1686, en el real palacio del Buen Retiro. Conságrala a la sacra real protección de la reina madre nuestra señora doña María-Ana de Austria*, (Madrid: Imprenta de Antonio Román, 1686): «De aquellos cuatro animales en cuyas formas le fueron mostrados los cuatro sumos imperios del orbe [al profeta Daniel] el cuarto simbolizaba el romano y los diez ramos que asombraban en su frente eran las diez principales provincias en que se dividió su dominio como son: Siria, Egipto, Asia, Grecia, África, España, Francia, Italia, Alemania y Bretaña. Entre estos floridos ramos, nació uno pequeño en sus principios, con ojos, y después creció tanto que quebrantó tres de los más robustos que al monstruoso animal adornaban la cerviz. Este es el imperio turco, que de humilde origen llegó a ocupar tres de las romanas provincias: el Egipto, la Asia y la Grecia. Ya nos ha mostrado antes Daniel, en el árbol y en la estatua, que el imperio romano ha de durar hasta la venida de Cristo, sin que alguna otra potencia pueda exterminarle, como denotan las plantas de los pies de hierro y las raíces, que siempre permanecen unas en la estatua y otras en el árbol. De aquí se infiere la evidente ruina del Imperio Otomano, porque el Romano

This text, introduces two ideas that are repeated along the theatrical feast: in the *loa* and in the text of the play. The first idea is that the Ottoman Empire has reached the culmination of its power and, that it will decay and ruin. The second idea implies that the Habsburg dynasty has divine blessing, because the Roman Empire will be at last protected by God.

These ideas about the impermanence of Ottoman Empire were not new in 1686. In 1618, Saavedra Fajardo had explained in his *Empresas políticas* that empires are born, they mature, and then they decline and die.

The youth of an Empire is strengthened by the swiftness, burning in it the blood and the spirit of great glory and of a greater dominance and judgment over other nations. [...] Later, they arrive at a mature age, and the respect and authority keep for a long time their power, although they were short of fame and appetite for getting more. But when this age decays, when the Empire does not have the strength, when other people are disrespectful, it is advisable to change the way and hurry the determination up and recover the vigor and lost heat and rejuvenate, before it fell down debilitated its strength<sup>13</sup>.

Jover Zamora has noted that this idea also appears in «Empresa 60», whose emblem is the arrow that is shot to the heaven, only to fall inevitably back to Earth<sup>14</sup>. Bances explains this with great clarity in *La restauración de Buda* with the words of the Marquis of Villena, one of the adventurers who took part in the siege of Buda and who represents the intellectual or well-read character:

VILLENA

Desde los romanos no hubo  
imperio que más creciese  
que el del turco, mas si todas  
las cosas del mundo tienen  
aumento y disminución  
y en un punto nunca pueden  
estar, pues el otomano  
llegó al auge más potente,  
¿quién duda que decline? (vv. 1293-1301)

'Since Romans, no other empire has grown as much as the Ottoman, but if all things of this world increase and decrease and can not remain in power, and the Turkish Empire has reached its highest peak, who doubts that it will decline?'

Bances develops also the idea that the Habsburg dynasty is consecrated by God, and links this idea to the inevitable fall of the Ottoman Empire. This consecration of the Spanish rulers appears in the title, because the *princeps* edition is also dedicated to the Habsburgs.

ha de permanecer hasta el fin; al Otomano no le señala el texto más hasta que tres [provincias]; estas ya las tiene en las tres referidas provincias, con que no puede pasar adelante su dominio».

13. Saavedra Fajardo, *Empresas políticas*, «Empresa 64», pp. 741-742. See also García Castañón, 1998.

14. Jover Zamora, 1997, p. 68.

*La comedia la restauración de Buda. Fiesta real que se representó a sus Majestades en la celebridad del augusto nombre del señor emperador, Leopoldo primero, el día quince de noviembre de este presente año de 1686, en el real palacio del Buen Retiro. Conságrala a la sacra real protección de la reina madre nuestra señora doña María-Ana de Austria.*

'The play of *La restauración de Buda*. Royal feast performed before their Majesties to celebrate the august name of the Lord Emperor, Leopold I, the day 15 of November of this current year 1686, in the Royal Palace of the Retiro. The author consecrates it to the sacred royal protection of the Queen Mother, our lady María-Ana of Austria'.

After this long title, the *loa* begins with the two characters called the Ottoman and Ottoman Empire chained to the feet of Julius Caesar, who gives the prisoners to the second Caesar, Leopold I of Austria, his legitimate successor:

CÉSAR Representa Yo soy Julio César, que  
el primero fundador  
fui del imperio romano,  
y el primero que feroz  
con las romanas legiones  
en la Hungría conquistó,  
y así advirtiéndole que un César  
con pública aclamación,  
por los romanos la Hungría  
a conquistar empezó,  
y otro César que también  
es romano emperador,  
la acaba de conquistar,  
no en vano resucito  
la era de César, que cuente  
sus años siempre, y la que hoy  
celebramos, de trofeos  
coronado, ufano doy  
el laurel (vv. 163-180)<sup>15</sup>

'Caesar (performing). I am Julius Caesar, who established the Roman Empire and I was the first to conquer Hungary with the Roman legions. And I caused admiration with my army in defeating people of Hungary. Today, another Caesar, also Emperor, has conquered again it, so he has restored the Caesar Age. And I give him this crown of laurel to celebrate it'.

The main idea in these verses is that the Habsburg dynasty is the main support of the Catholic religion. The war against the Ottoman Empire is not only a duty, it is

15. The same idea is also presented in the play: «Pues, ¿quién duda que el romano, / que hoy en Leopoldo florece / segunda vez, vuelva al auge / a pesar de los rebeldes, / porque un augusto se ensalce / donde un tirano fallece?» 'Then, who doubts that the Roman, who blooms in Leopold today, come back to its peak a second time, in spite of the rebels, because an august is praised where a tyrant dies' (vv. 1315-1320).

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necessary because God's protection. And this implies an aggressive policy against those infidel. The devotion to Catholicism of the two branches of the royal family helps prepare new conquests:

MÚSICA                    ¡Viva la gran casa de Austria  
                                  cuyo fervoroso celo  
                                  alma es de la religión,  
                                  gloria es de la fe, supuesto  
                                  que en el católico y cesáreo reino  
                                  columna del impíreo es hoy su imperio.  
                                  (vv. 3160-3165)

'Glory to the great House of Austria. Their fervor is the soul of our religion, the splendor of the faith! Today their support the Catholic Church'.

The quotation uses the word *impíreo* to name heaven. The *Diccionario de autos sacramentales* defines the word *impíreo* as: «the last heaven in which God has installed his residence». Arellano goes on in his *Dictionary of the sacramental plays*: «this heaven has an immense and invaluable light and a divine clarity. That is the reason for calling it *Empíreo*, meaning fire. And the reason is not because its nature and substance belongs to fire, but because of its admirable brightness and glorious light»<sup>16</sup>. The passage in this play is not unique; we can find examples of passages that justify the divine consecration of the Habsburg dynasty in Calderón's sacramental plays, as Enrique Rull and Ignacio Arellano have noted<sup>17</sup>. In the sacramental plays, the glorification of Habsburgs is based on the particular devotion of the royal family to the sacred Eucharist. In *La restauración de Buda*, Bances bases the idealization of the royal ruler on both his heroism and his defense of faith in a fight against the infidels.

This idealization is also present in *El Austria en Jerusalén*. In the play, Frederick I Hochestaufen interprets the deeds of Leopold VI in the Holy Land as an omen that fortells the future splendor of the Habsburg because of God's special protection to that royal family:

FEDERICO                    en memoria  
                                  de tan heroico trofeo  
                                  desde hoy a la casa de Austria  
                                  por augustas armas dejo  
                                  banda blanca en campo rojo,  
                                  pues no en vano del suceso  
                                  de estar intacta la banda  
                                  y manchado todo infiero  
                                  que ha de estar intacta en todo  
                                  a los siglos venideros  
                                  la pureza de la casa

16. I translate into English a quotation taken from Arellano, 2000, using a reference to Villalón and his *El Crotalón*.

17. Rull Fernández, 1983 and 1994; see also Arellano, 2000, pp. 35-36.



que guarda Dios para centro  
de la fe. (vv. 2370-2382)

'From today, I give to the House of Austria a coat of arms red with a white band in memory of this heroic victory, because the enemy blood around the white band will show that this dynasty's purity will remain untouched in the following centuries. And God will protect them as the heart of his faith'.

In this passage, we can observe the kind of manipulation of history that is so common in Bances' plays. According to Runciman, Leopold, the VI, was in the Holy Land for almost two years as part of the «Fifth crusade», although he had never encounter Emperor Frederick there, as Bances' text declares. This falsification of what really happened is deeply connected to the process of mystifying the Habsburgs, because the heroism of the Duke Leopold prefigures the deeds of his descendant, Emperor Leopold, his Spanish relatives and his heroic deeds in a new Jerusalem called Buda.

Furthermore, everything gets clear when a character representing the Devil appears. He regrets a future where the Habsburg will be the successors of the dynasty of Suevia (the dynasty of Frederick, getting in that way the royal titles of Naples and Jerusalem) and following a Holy war against the Muslims. This aggressive and belligerent spirit nature is the most remarkable feature of Bances' Frederick.

*La restauración de Buda* can not only be considered as a detailed report of what happened in Buda: its siege and its final conquest, because the play is skilfully planned to make a deep impression to its Spanish audiences. If the first act is designed to explain the geo-strategic significance of the town of Buda and the convulsed history of Hungary, showing the spectator a complete picture of what had happened at the end of the first act, the second and the beginning of the third act are designed to describe the spectator the heroism of Spanish adventurers, especially that of the Duke of Béjar. This character will die in an assault, when they made an effort to place Christian soldiers in the town. The percentage of verses where the Spanish characters are protagonists is around 23%. I do not want to analyse the Duke of Béjar's death and Bances Candamo's manipulation of history, with which the playwright tries to embellish literarily it, because I have already published some articles with this research. I prefer this time to concentrate myself on that percentage so significant, because when the Spaniards are involved in the plot, the references to the Austria dynasty, the Catholic religion and the virtues of the noble Spanish soldier (heroism, courage, goodness, generosity...) are continuous. The Spanish aristocracy goes to Buda «no sólo por la empresa / heroica en que a defender / bizarramente se arriesga / la religión y la augusta / gran Casa de Austria» 'not only to an enterprise where the religion and the august House of Austria are defended' (vv. 1000-1004), but even to demonstrate its courage («Ya es ocasión de dar muestra / de nuestro valor invicto» 'It is high time we showed our valour' vv. 1050-1051). This courage is even recognised by their Turkish enemies (vv. 1056-1060) and their final objective is to get the last glory, the martyrdom.



BÉJAR

¡A morir vamos resueltos  
 en tan horroroso lance  
 por la fe y la casa de Austria,  
 si es que pueden separarse  
 fe y casa de Austria, supuesto  
 que en la consecuencia iguales  
 si falta la Casa de Austria  
 puede ser que la fe falte  
 en tantos reinos, a quien  
 sombra sus laureles hace! (vv. 2058-2067)

'We are sure that we fight for our faith and the House of Austria, although it is impossible to separate faith and Austria dynasty, because both of them are the same. If the House of Austria disappears, it could be possible that the faith will cease in so many kingdoms, because the Habsburgs protect faith with their victories'.

This theatre is not only conceived to amaze and entertain the members of the Spanish court. Bances, in his *Teatro de los teatros*, insisted that the main aim of his theatre was the education of the Prince and we can find some references in the works I am analysing. In many occasions, Bances stresses the necessity for the Christian ruler of defeating oneself, controlling their passions, which is a very well-known topic of the Spanish theatre. For example, in *El Austria en Jerusalén*, Saladin, sultan of Egypt, explains:

SALADINO

El señor emperador  
 que esposo habéis elegido  
 lidia con un gran monarca  
 y habiendo de competir  
 fortuna es de la desgracia  
 ser heroico el enemigo.  
 A su esposa y su retrato  
 que están en el poder mío  
 sabe tratar el Soldán  
 con el respeto debido.  
 Venerar a mi contrario  
 es vencerme yo a mí mismo  
 y mal le resistiré  
 a él, si a mí no me resisto (vv. 1410-1423)

'The Emperor, who is your husband, fights against me, a great monarch. I know how to treat the Emperor's portrait and wife because both are in my hands. To reverence my enemy means to defeat myself and I will badly oppose him, if I do not fight against me'.

In certain circumstances, the ruler recognizes with desolation that his plans do not succeed or he must confront immense difficulties that cause him despair and concern. Again, in *El Austria en Jerusalén*, Frederick desperates because a town can not be taken by assault, but he trusts all to the Divine Providence:

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FEDERICO

De Dios la diestra todo poderosa  
es quien da la victorias de su mano  
pues, ¿qué puede sin él el poder humano?  
(vv. 1751-1753)

'God's right hand gives all the victories, because, what can make human power without him?'.  
'

And in *La restauración de Buda*, Charles, Duke of Lorraine, notices with dejection how the besieged soldiers endure and that the Visir has sent fresh troops to help the town.

LORENA

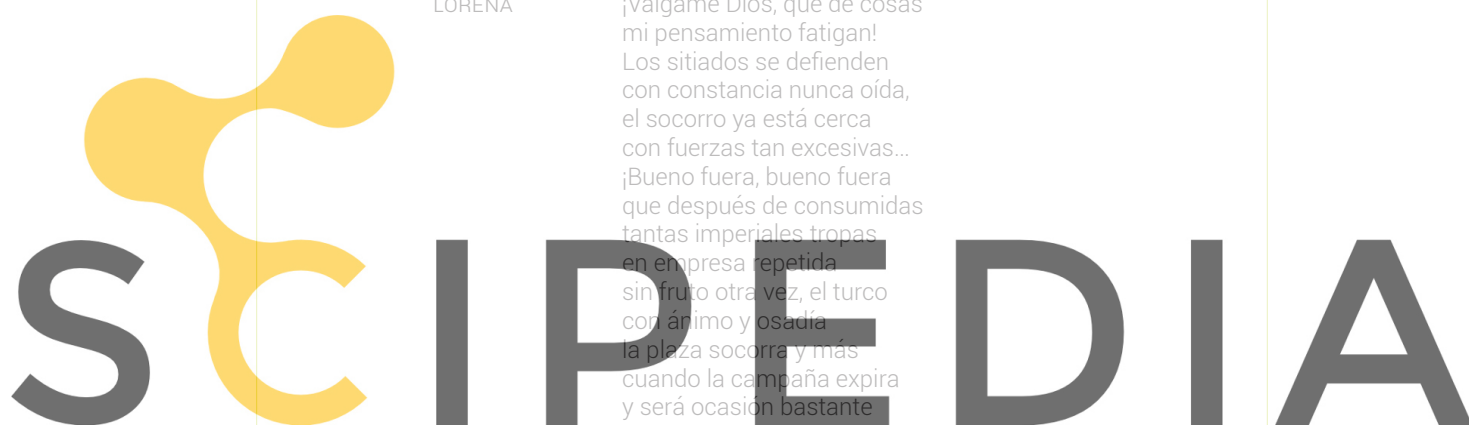
¡Válgame Dios, qué de cosas  
mi pensamiento fatigan!  
Los sitiados se defienden  
con constancia nunca oída,  
el socorro ya está cerca  
con fuerzas tan excesivas...  
¡Bueno fuera, bueno fuera  
que después de consumidas  
tantas imperiales tropas  
en empresa repetida  
sin fruto otra vez, el turco  
con ánimo y osadía  
la plaza socorra y más  
cuando la campaña expira  
y será ocasión bastante  
que Buda no se consiga,  
a que todo el cristianismo  
se trunquen nuestros progresos  
y se disuelva la liga! (vv. 2451-2470)

'For God, my mind is tired with so many things! The besieged soldiers defend themselves with a great perseverance, the enemy has sent more forces and they are very close to the town... It would be horrible that after so many imperial troops wasted in a repeated campaign without result, the Turks, with bravery and audacity, come to the aid of this fortress. Especially when the campaign expires. And if we do not take Buda, all Christianity will cool down and, all our progress will cease and the Holly League will dissolve'.

Finally, another important message is the necessity of total war against the infidel, always following a code of behaviour ruled by chivalry and generosity toward the weak and the imprisoned. It is true that Christian knights fought against the infidel. But in Bances' plays, they show compassion toward the women of the enemies, when they are captured:

LORENA

que aunque religión distinta  
profesáis, el ser mujeres  
trae una prerrogativa  
que habla con todos los nobles



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'Although you confess another religion, being a woman is a prerogative written in all languages that speaks with all the aristocracy and I do not know how to capture women but serve them'.

BAVIERA                    Concédaseles a esos  
la vida, que en los rendidos  
no cortan nobles aceros. (vv. 3129-3137)

– Baviera: Protect their lives, because noble steels do not cut those who have surrendered.'

BAVIERA Bien hecho será, pues hay cristianos que den fomento al turco, sin reparar que es engrosar el inmenso

océano de ambición  
que ha de tragárselos luego. (vv. 3142-3157)

‘— Villena: The soldiers have found a great number of foreign Christians in the fortress; I put an end to [the soldiers’] fury by telling them they must leave them until your Highness decides what to do with them.

— Lorena: Put them in prison, that, I swear, I am going to do justice to them.

— Baviera: This will be well done. There are Christians that support the Turkish, without taking into account that the Ottoman Empire is an ocean, capable of swallowing them’.

*El Austria en Jerusalén* provides an example of a similar situation, when Ermينيا, one of the principle leaders of the Ottoman army, is injured and dying, she is baptised by Alfonso of Portugal. That action miraculously saves her life. Christian hierarchies are able to see something more than enemies in Turkish soldiers and rulers; they perceive them as people whose actions are admirable. For example, Christian leaders praise Abdí Baja, governor of Buda, when he dies defending his town (vv. 3106-3122). And in *El Austria en Jerusalén*, they express their admiration for Ottoman rulers:

REY                      Ved en un bárbaro aquí  
                              una enseñanza tan docta  
                              para los fieles y ved  
                              cómo en ellos se malogra (vv. 3074-3077)

‘You can see here, in a barbarian, a so learned teaching for believers and notice how it spoils in them’.

In conclusion, it is essential to analyse Bances Candamo's plays in the context of where these plays were written and performed. In the two courtly plays I have analysed, I cannot find any evidence of censure of the court. Instead, we see the kind of glorification of the Habsburgs dynasty, that is found in many other works, such as Calderón's sacramental plays. I think we face with the problem of the projection of a modulated image by a propaganda policy. And that attitude is not exclusive of Bances. The National Library of Spain houses a pamphlet published in 1684 by don Rodrigo Gómez de Aguilera y Saavedra entitled *Jerusalén libertada y restauración de toda la Palestina. Caída y desolación de la secta de Mahoma*. This pamphlet explains that according to several prophecies and different signs, the Spanish King, Charles II, is called to liberate the entire Holy Land and defeat Islam<sup>18</sup>. I do not know if such works could have influenced our playwright to compose *El Austria en Jerusalén*. What I am sure about is that we must decode the images of authority and reality that Spanish writers of the period project, taking into account the context and the poetic genre in which the work is written.

18. Spanish National Library, catalog number V.E. 14-18.

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